

A passion for change

I had the opportunity to testify before the Senate Education Committee on the changes that would be made if Senate Bill 130 becomes law. This is the legislation that would require all 11th-graders to take the ACT as part of the CATS test. The ACT assesses the areas of English, reading, mathematics and science. SB 130 also requires the WorkKeys assessments in reading for information, business writing and applied mathematics and any other components necessary to comply with the federal NCLB Act as part of CATS. The legislation also includes two components of the Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS) – eighth- and ninth-graders would take the EXPLORE component and 10th-graders would take the PLAN component.

The areas assessed by ACT and WorkKeys are the areas we as board members are currently discussing both for KERA and NCLB. These are the areas that the majority of us agree are in need of more rigorous instruction. And they are the areas we are trying to improve through our concentration on rigor and relevance, and middle school and high school reform and restructuring. We are asking questions about teacher preparation as well as student achievement. We know how important teacher training is and if that training doesn't take into account all proposed improvements in elementary and secondary education, our efforts will be in vain. We also have met with members of the business community, educators and education gurus nationwide.

Thinking about all of this is enough to make your head spin. We need not only think, but we must act. We understand that our students must be able to succeed in a global society. We understand that the majority of the jobs of the future, the jobs our students will compete for, have yet



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to be designed. I support SB 130. I see it as a way to help us as educators and board members assess what we are teaching and how we are teaching. It will help us determine if our students are ready for the "real world."

There is, however, another element to this mix. A recent news story reported on student opinion of the proposed legislation. Their responses concerned me. The students interviewed did not place much importance on the ACT and seemed to accept remediation in their college freshman year as a fact of life. These students seemed to expect a five-year college career as the norm – and that doesn't in-

clude a master's degree program. The prospect of taking 000 courses, which do not count toward a degree and add to the cost of a college education, did not seem to bother those students.

Their views reinforce a statement by Dr. Willard Daggett, one of the presenters at our annual conference. He said, "We cannot change education until the public is ready, the faculty is ready and there is a passion for change rather than a resistance to change."

I agree with this statement and believe we must add students to those who need to have a passion for change. As long as we allow our students to see their senior year as a year to coast, there will continue to be a need for remediation at the college level and no passion for change.

Our job is cut out for us. We need to be the agents of change. I realize, as do you, that change is neither cheap nor free, but is inevitable. We must first examine our belief system and look beyond the future as we know it. We as board members must develop a passion for change, rather than be resistors of change. ☿

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